

Zapp-Von Rosenberg House  
In W. portion of "Henkel Square"  
Round Top  
Fayette County  
Texas

HABS No. TEX 3252

HABS  
TEX  
75-ROUNT  
6-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. TEX 3252

## ZAPP-VON ROSENBERG HOUSE

Location: In the west portion of the twenty-five acre restoration area, "Henkel Square", Round Top, Fayette County, Texas.  
Latitude: 30 03' 52" N Longitude: 96 41' 43" W

Present Owner: The Real Estate Mortgage Corporation, Houston, Texas.

Present Occupant: An Historical House Museum, a part of "Henkel Square" development of the Texas Pioneer Arts Foundation.

Statement of Significance: It was built by carpenters of the German tradition, but its plan form with the breezeway indicates that, as elsewhere in the southern states, houses were being adapted to the hot summer weather of the region.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

## A. Physical History:

1. General History: As a part of the Stephen F. Austin colony, James Winn acquired 4,428 acres in 1831; the present townsite was included in this tract. Named after early settlers, the town was known as Townsend; later it was renamed Round Top since the postmaster lived in a house with a round tower. Portions of nearby Nassau Farm were purchased by the German organization, Adelsverein. Settlement by German immigrants began 1845 to 1847 and continued for more than three decades.
2. Ownership of the Property: A portion of the James Winn holdings were sold in 1835 to John York who in turn sold two-hundred and forty-one acres to John Shults in 1841. Of this tract Edward Henkel acquired twenty-five acres in 1852, and after 1856 began selling lots along and near the old Brenham-La Grange Road. The builder of the house, Robert, Zapp, was born in Germany at Eiberfeld about 1820, and arrived in Texas in 1846. To the south of Round Top he acquired over 200 acres of farm land, and in 1868 he bought town lots and a store from Henkel, but it appears that he did not build the house until 1875. He lived there until 1883 when he sold it. The buyer, Alex Von Rosenberg, was born at Menel, East Prussia about 1835. The son of Carl Von Rosenberg, he had arrived in Fayette

ZAPP-VON ROSENBERG HOUSE  
HABS No. TLX 3252 (Page 2)

County in 1849. Alex sold the house in 1895 to his older brother, Eugen; there he and his family lived until 1906 when the property was sold. After several ownership transfers it became part of the Texas Pioneer Arts Properties in 1965.

2. Date of Erection: About 1875.
3. Builder: No definite information is available. The methods of construction and joinery indicate that the traditional German building methods were being used in the area.
4. Recent Restoration Work: Since it became a part of the "Henkel Square" development, some boarding has been replaced, new roofing has been added, and the exterior and interiors have been repainted. Care has been taken to make use of original type materials, and to preserve the original character of the house.

B. Sources of Information:

1. Manuscript:

"A Summary of the Abstract of Henkel Square, Round Top, Texas" by W. Lewis Barlow, IV, 1972. Texas Pioneer Arts Foundation.

2. Bibliography:

Bieseke, Dr. R. L., History of the Early German Settlements in Texas 1830-1860. Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1930.

Lotto, F., Fayette County: Her History and Her People. Schulenburg, Texas, Sticker Steam Press, 1902.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER:

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: An interesting house with the wood craftsmanship of the immigrant German carpenters adapted to the breezeway plan (dog run), type used in the southland.
2. Condition of Fabric: Good; recent restoration has been completed as a part of Henkel Square of the Texas Pioneer Arts Foundation.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Over-all Dimensions: One story, rectangular in plan with a breezeway in the middle; outside dimensions about 32' x 43'.
2. Foundations: Piers of ledge sandstone supporting 8" x 8" cedar sills, which in turn carry 3" x 8" joists spaced 24" on centers. The under-space of the house is open.
3. Wall Construction: Studding, 2" x 4" full, and 4" x 4" corner posts carry a 5" x 5" upper plate; the plate has a scarfed joint at the mid-point. Exterior lapped siding is exposed 7" to the weather; the interior has horizontal boarding, papered in the larger rooms. There is no access to the attic space.
4. Porches: There are similarly shaped porches on the northeast and southwest sides of the house with a connecting breezeway. On the northeast end of the breezeway there is a five-foot doorway with a pair of plank-type doors. There is a painted wainscot on the walls of the porches; it is gray in color with black joints to simulate ashlar stonework.
5. Chimneys: On the northwest end of the house in the large bedroom there is a fireplace with a large stone masonry chimney. A small chimney that served a wood-burning stove is in the kitchen. This stone masonry chimney is supported by the ceiling joists of the kitchen-dining room.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and Doors: The doors from the breezeway into the two larger rooms are plank-type, built up of wide boards, 12" to 15".
  - b. Windows: All windows are double-hung, six-over-six lights.
7. Roof: A ridge roof has double pitch on each side. The roof in the center is 10 in 12 pitch; those over the porches are 6 in 12. Eaves project only slightly, about 2" on the end gables. The shingles are split-cedar.

C. Description of the Interiors:

1. Floor Plans: Basically it is a simple breezeway (dog run), type plan with the central open space (with a door on the northeast to close in winter), and a large room on either side. To this basic house small rooms were added on the four corners and these enclose a porch on the northeast and southwest sides. The two small rooms on the southwest are bedrooms and connect with doors to the larger rooms. The two small rooms on the other side of the house are also bedrooms with doors opening to the porch. These private rooms were used for guests.
2. Flooring: In all rooms the floors are 1 x 6 tongue-and groove. The porches are floored with 1" rough-sawn, random-width cedar boards.
3. Wall and Ceiling Finish: Walls are finished in horizontal ship-lap boarding; the kitchen-dining room and the bedroom are papered; smaller rooms have painted boarding. Ceilings are painted beaded car-siding.
4. Doorways and Doors: All doors are plank-type, built-up of wide boards, with three cross-pieces.
5. Lighting: There is no electric wiring in the house. Kerosene lamps were the lights used.
6. Heating: In the large bedroom there is a fireplace with a large mantel of modified classic design, quite Germanic in character. The wood-fired range heated the kitchen-dining room. As was characteristic of typical rural houses of the last century, the small bedrooms were not heated.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and Orientation: The house faces southwestward toward the Haw Creek Road. It is now a part of the Henkel Square development of the Texas Pioneer Arts Foundation.
2. Outbuildings: Near the house to the southeastward

ZAPP-VON ROSENBERG HOUSE  
HABS No. TEX 3252 (Page 5)

is the cistern house, about 12' x 14' in plan dimension. With its water supply from the roof of the house, it furnished household water, and cooling for milk products; however, in late summer this cooling was rather ineffective in this area.

Prepared by Melvin M. Rotsch  
Professor  
Texas A & M University  
National Park Service  
August 1972